

## Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 L-03 INT-05 TRSE-00 /025 R

DRAFTED BY OES/ENP/EN:G. KINTER - L/EB:J. CROOK

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ARA/MEX - T.R. MARTIN

INT/NPS - K. THELEN

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R 240146Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, ELTN, MX

SUBJECT: CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE BRIDGE BETWEEN BOQUILLAS,  
MEXICO AND BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

1. U.S. PARK SERVICE HAS ADVISED DEPARTMENT THAT GOM HAS  
CONSTRUCTED CUSTOMS/IMMIGRATION STATION AT VILLAGE OF  
BOQUILLAS OPPOSITE SOUTHEASTERN BORDER BIG BEND NATIONAL  
PARK AND NOW IN PROCESS PAVING ROAD FROM MUZQUIZ IN  
COAHUILA STATE NORTH TO BOQUILLAS. WHILE NOT KNOWING GOM'S  
INTENTIONS, PARK SERVICE CONCERNED THESE ACTIONS MAY LEAD  
TO PRESSURE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE AT  
BOQUILLAS. PARK SERVICE HAS MADE MATTER OF RECORD TO GOM  
ITS OPPOSITION TO CROSSING AT BOQUILLAS AND ITS PREFERENCE  
FOR USE OF CROSSING AT LA LINDA, ON EASTERN EDGE OF PARK,  
BUT WISHES FORMALLY REITERATE POSITION TO BE CERTAIN THAT  
NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS DEVELOP.

2. DEPARTMENT SHARES THESE VIEWS AND THEREFORE REQUESTS  
EMBASSY INCORPORATE FOLLOWING INTO A WRITTEN COMMUNICATION  
FOR DELIVERY AT EARLIEST CONVENIENCE TO GOM:

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(QUOTE) THE EMBASSY WISHES TO DRAW TO THE ATTENTION OF

THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO THE CONCERNS OF UNITED STATES OFFICIALS REGARDING ANY POSSIBLE PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE IN THE

VICINITY OF BOQUILLAS, MEXICO, TO BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS. A BRIDGE AT THIS LOCATION, AND THE ATTENDANT HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT AND TRAFFIC ON THE U.S. SIDE, WOULD HAVE SEVERE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK. THE APPROVAL, THEREFORE, OF ANY PROPOSALS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SUCH A BRIDGE BY THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BE PRESUMED. THE EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS AT THIS TIME FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE AT BOQUILLAS, BUT WISHES TO MAKE THESE CONCERNS A MATTER OF RECORD IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY FUTURE MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

(QUOTE) IN THIS CONNECTION, THE EMBASSY REFERS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO A STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EXPRESSING THAT AGENCY'S STRONG OPPOSITION TO A CROSSING AT BOQUILLAS:

(BEGIN INNER QUOTE) THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HAS BEEN ADVISED THAT THE MEXICAN ROAD TO BOQUILLAS HAS BEEN PAVED TO LA COSTA AND CONSTRUCTION HAS STARTED ON THE NEXT 45 MILE SECTION TO THE U.S. BORDER AT BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS.

(INNER QUOTE) ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS, THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE (APRIL, 1975 TO LIC. HORACIO GALLEGOS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONOPAN, SECRETARIAT OF PUBLIC WORKS) AND MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AND A JOINT SITE STUDY BY U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND MEXICAN PERSONNEL OF SECRETARIAT OF PUBLIC WORKS (APRIL, 1975), THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HAS CONSISTENTLY INFORMED THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT OF ITS OBJECTION TO A "BOQUILLAS BRIDGE-CROSSING" INTO BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK AND HAS SUGGESTED AS AN ALTERNATE USE OF THE CROSSING AT "LA LINDA" OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY. THE OPPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO THE BOQUILLAS CROSSING IS BASED ON THE UNCLASSIFIED

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ANTICIPATED EXTREME ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THAT INCREASED VEHICLE TRAFFIC AND BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE ON THIS SECTION OF THE PARK.

(INNER QUOTE) THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE POSITION IS THAT IF THIS ROUTE WERE DEVELOPED AS THE PRINCIPAL NORTH-SOUTH ACCESS TO THE COUNTRIES, THE RESULTANT IMPACT ON THE PARK ENVIRONMENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE VICINITY OF THE RIO

GRANDE VILLAGE, WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT. THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CROSSING, INCLUDING FACILITIES FOR CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS, PLUS THE INCREASED DEMANDS FOR COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC THROUGH THE PARK, ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE BASIC PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE PARK WAS ESTABLISHED.

WHILE THE PRESENT INFORMAL CROSSING AT BOQUILLAS HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A WAY FOR THE PARK VISITOR TO BE EXPOSED TO THE ATMOSPHERE OF A BORDER VILLAGE, THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT COULD NOT STAND THE IMPACT OF THIS POINT BECOMING THE MAIN ENTRANCE INTO MEXICO ALONG THIS STRETCH OF THE BORDER.

(INNER QUOTE) IT IS SUGGESTED THAT ANOTHER LOCATION BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS PRINCIPAL CROSSING. THE EXISTING ROAD, COMMENCING AT A POINT ON ROUTE 385 JUST NORTH OF THE PARK AND CROSSING THE RIO GRANDE AT LA LINDA, PRESENTS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR EVENTUAL ACCESS SOUTHWARD TO INTERIOR MEXICO. SUCH A ROUTE WOULD ALSO PROVIDE MUCH BETTER ACCESS INTO THE SIERRA DEL CARMEN-FRONTERIZA RANGE, A PRINCIPAL FEATURE OF A POSSIBLE MEXICAN COMPANION PARK. THIS PROPOSED ROAD WOULD ALSO BE AVAILABLE FOR COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC NOT PERMITTED IN BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK.

(INNER QUOTE) THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REQUESTS THAT THE EMBASSY ADVISE APPROPRIATE MEXICAN OFFICIALS OF THE CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO A BOQUILLAS TO BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE-CROSSING AND A WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH MEXICAN OFFICIALS IN INSURING THE PROTECTION OF THIS SHARED ECOSYSTEM. (END INNER QUOTE). (UNQUOTE).

3. PLEASE ADVISE OF ANY GOM REACTION AND VIEWS . ROBINSON  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES, PUBLIC PARKS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 JUL 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE183859  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** L/EB:J. CROOK  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760286-0085  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760724/aaaaauxl.tel  
**Line Count:** 154  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN OES  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <19 APR 2004 by ThomasVJ>; RELEASED <19 APR 2004 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <27 DEC 2004 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE BRIDGE BETWEEN BOQUILLAS, MEXICO AND BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
**TAGS:** SENV, ELTN, MX  
**To:** MEXICO  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006